



Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number:
P.C. 11/18/02 Item:

File Number:
GP02-06-03

Council District and SNI Area:
6 – N/A

Major Thoroughfares Map Number:
99

Assessor's Parcel Number(s):
455-32-006 and 455-32-001

Project Manager: Deanna Chow

GENERAL PLAN REPORT

2002 Fall Hearing

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

General Plan amendment request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) on 3.4 acres, Light Industrial on 0.6 acres and Public/Quasi-Public on 0.4 acres to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC).

LOCATION: Southeast corner of the intersection of Almaden Expressway and Curtner Avenue, and north of the terminus of Rinconada Drive and Pebble Beach Drive

ACREAGE: 4.4

APPLICANT/OWNER:

The Schoennauer Company/Scottish Rite Temple Foundation

GENERAL PLAN LAND USE / TRANSPORTATION DIAGRAM DESIGNATION:

Existing Designation: High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC), Light Industrial and Public/Quasi-Public

Proposed Designation: Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC)

EXISTING ZONING DISTRICT(S): A - Agriculture

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION(S):

North: Second Harvest Food Bank – Public/Quasi-Public

South: Scottish Rite Temple – Light Industrial

East: Church – Public/Quasi-Public

West: Multi-family and single-family residential – High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC) and Medium Low Density Residential (8 DU/AC)

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS:

Mitigated Negative Declaration

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) on 4.4 acres,
Public/Quasi-Public on 7.7 acres and a Floating Park
designation

Approved by:

Date:

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

CITY DEPARTMENT AND PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED:

- Department of Transportation – The General Plan amendment is not expected to result in a significant, long-term traffic impact.
- Department of Public Works –
 - Access: Public Works recommends a private street between the west corner of the subject lot and Masonic Drive.
 - Flood: A portion of the site is located in Flood Zone AO-2. The site is subject to flooding from the Guadalupe River and the Canoas Creek. A portion of the site was filled during the construction of the Scottish Rite Temple and the fill was not analyzed for blockage. This could result in increased flood levels and flooding and/or increased flood depths to adjacent properties. At the time of development, a Flood Blockage Study will be required. The design of all residential units will need to be a minimum of 2 feet above the highest existing adjacent grade and all support utility systems will need to be above base flood elevation or protected from potential flood damage.
 - The site is located in a Geological Hazard Zone and State Liquefaction Zone
- Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services – The Parks Commission recommended an on-site park.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:

- Canoas Garden Neighborhood Association – The letter indicates that the neighborhood, which abuts the southern perimeter of the subject site, is supportive of the proposed General Plan change. They raise concerns, however, including site access through their neighborhood and appropriate landscape and interface. They are willing to work with the future developer to alleviate these concerns at the project review stage.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a privately initiated General Plan amendment to the *San Jose 2020 General Plan* Land Use/Transportation Diagram from High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC), Public/Quasi-Public and Light Industrial to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) on a 4.4 acre site. The proposed change could facilitate higher density residential development and/or mixed use development that would not be allowed under the current mix of designations. The Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) designation is intended for residential development in close proximity to major public transit facilities such as light rail stations and along major bus routes. The subject site is located within a reasonable walking distance to the Curtner Light Rail Station. The proposed land use designation would generate a net increase of approximately 115 dwelling units and 10 jobs above existing land use designations.

BACKGROUND

The proposed amendment from High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC), Light Industrial and Public/Quasi-Public to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) is being proposed by the applicant in

an effort to facilitate higher density housing on an infill site near a transit station. The subject site is a 4.4-acre portion of a larger 12.1-acre site owned by the Scottish Rite Temple Foundation.

The entire Scottish Rite Temple site is part of a larger Planned Development zoning (PDC72-08-081) extending from the intersection of Canoas Garden and Curtner Avenues to the terminus of Masonic Drive. The zoning allows two fraternal lodges, a church, professional offices, research and development facilities, a motel and various retail uses. A recreational facility was originally to be built on the subject site, but was never completed. In 1989, the City Council initiated and approved a rezoning from R-1-8 (PD) to A-Agriculture for the subject piece of property as part of the Planned Development Monitoring Program. The proposed A-Agriculture District zoning was intended to be an interim zoning until a development consistent with the General Plan was proposed. At that time, constraints included site access and project interface with residential uses on the west.

The subject site is located in an area that has undergone a transition in land uses from non-residential to higher density residential over the past several years through the approval of several General Plan amendments. Most recently, the City Council approved two General Plan amendments on Evans Lane, just north of the site off of Canoas Garden Avenue, from Light Industrial to High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC). In 1998, the City Council approved General Plan change to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) on a 4.5 acre-site (Masonic Lodge) located at the terminus of Masonic Drive, just south of the Scottish Rite Temple.

Site and Surrounding Uses

The 4.4-acre site is currently undeveloped and is part of the larger Scottish Rite Temple site. The subject site is relatively flat and comprised of unengineered fill which elevates the site approximately 6 feet above the adjacent single family and multi-family residences to the west. However, the site is below the existing elevation of the Scottish Rite Temple and parking lot which is located to the south of the subject site. The site does not have direct access from a public street. It is anticipated that access to the site would be provided by a new driveway developed in conjunction with the existing access to the Scottish Rite Temple from Masonic Drive.

Surrounding uses include the Second Harvest Food Bank and the on/off ramps to Almaden Expressway on the north, a large church facility to the east, the Scottish Rite Temple and parking lot is to the south, and multi-family and single-family residential uses are located to the west. Land uses on Masonic Drive include a mobile home park and the Masonic Lodge. The Curtner Light Rail Station is located approximately 2,000 feet to the east, within walking distance of the site.



Subject site adjacent to the Scottish Rite Temple



Aerial view of the site



Subject site adjacent to Rinconada Drive



Current access to the site

ANALYSIS

Policy Consistency/Land Use Compatibility

Land Use Compatibility

The proposed Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) designation is compatible with the adjacent high density residential uses. The proposed land use designation can be compatible with single-family residential if appropriate design measures, such as scaling down heights and densities adjacent to single-family neighborhoods, proper setbacks, landscaping buffers, etc. are implemented at the project stage. Additionally, at the zoning stage, concerns regarding access, circulation, and site design would need to be addressed to help ensure that future new development does not negatively impact the adjacent residential

neighborhoods. The site is within a flood blockage area, which will require further study in conjunction with design of any future project.

Parks

On November 6, 2002, the Parks and Recreation Commission commented on the proposed General Plan amendment. The Commission noted that the subject area is not easily accessible to parks in the neighborhood and that a park on site would be desirable.

The City's Parkland Dedication Ordinance requires all residential development to dedicate land or pay in-lieu fees for any net increase in residential units. Typically, in-lieu fees are paid for projects consisting of less than 50 new dwelling units. The proposed change to Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) and any resultant development would add a significant number of new residents to an area that is already lacking in parks and open space.

Staff is recommending the placement of a "floating" Public Park/Open Space designation to cover the subject site and the adjacent land currently under the common ownership of the Scottish Rite Temple Foundation. This designation would clarify the City's preference for on-site parkland. To provide flexibility at the zoning stage, the Public Park/Open Space designation is "floating" on the property and is not specifying a particular location or acreage. The amount of required parkland would be based upon the Parkland Dedication Ordinance and the number of dwelling units proposed at the zoning stage. The location of the park would be determined in the context of a proposed residential zoning on the subject site.

The Floating Public Park/Open Space designation would help ensure the development of a park in the area at the zoning stage which would not only benefit the new residents, but the existing nearby residents. The addition of the floating park designation is consistent with the Parks and Recreation Goal #1 which states that the City should consider, as an objective, the provision of a neighborhood community park within a reasonable walking distance for each resident.

Public/Quasi-Public Uses

In conjunction with the proposed General Plan amendment, staff is recommending to change the land use designation for the remaining 7.7-acre portion of the existing Scottish Rite Temple property from Light Industrial to Public/Quasi-Public to reflect the existing use. Public/Quasi-Public uses, such as churches, food banks, and fraternal lodges which are located to the north, east and south of the site, can be compatible with higher density or mixed-use developments. The existing Scottish Rite Temple is situated on a site designated Light Industrial, which is inconsistent with the existing use as a fraternal lodge and inappropriate given the surrounding existing and planned land uses. The proposed change would create a more compatible interface should future redevelopment of the site occur and be more compatible with the existing and proposed Transit Corridor Residential land use designated sites just north and south of the lodge. The conversion of this land to Public/Quasi-Public would not undermine the City's efforts to preserve industrial areas elsewhere in the City.

The proposed land use change is supportive of several General Plan Major Strategies, including Growth Management, Housing and Sustainable City. These strategies promote increased residential densities near transit stations, infill development and the efficient use of resources. The proposed amendment is also consistent with several General Plan Goals and Policies which encourage higher density housing near

light rail lines and other major transportation facilities. Balanced Community Policy #2 supports the integration of housing with transportation systems and Residential Land Use Policy #3 states that locations near light rail transit stations and along bus transit routes are preferable for higher density housing. The intensification of areas near transit allows for higher density housing in appropriate urban locations, where city services and facilities are located, resulting in reduced sprawl and efficient use of resources.

In summary, staff is supportive of this proposed amendment which is consistent with city goals and strategies which promote infill development and increased residential densities in appropriate locations near transit facilities.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The property owners and occupants within a 1,000-foot radius were sent a newsletter regarding the two community meetings that were held on October 8 and 10, 2002. They also received a notice of the public hearings to be held on the subject amendment before the Planning Commission in November and City Council in December. In addition, the Department's web-site contains information regarding the General Plan process, amendments, staff reports, and hearing schedule. This site is used by the community to keep informed of the status of the amendments.

Several community members expressed concern regarding access to the site from either Rinconada or Pebble Beach Drive and the potential for additional traffic through the neighborhood. One community member expressed concern regarding privacy, stating that the site is currently elevated and multi-story housing on top of the elevated area would further impede on their privacy.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC) on 4.4 acres, Public/Quasi-Public on 7.7 acres and a Floating Park designation.